



GEOGRAPHY OF FLORIDA - GEA 2270

3 Credits – 6000 Word Requirement (WR)

100% Online (Asynchronous)

Department of Geography, University of Florida

Course Syllabus - Summer B 2025

Lead instructor: Zainab Ali: zainabali@ufl.edu

Office Hours: Tuesdays 9:00am – 11:00am EST or by appointment

On Zoom (link on Canvas)

Co-instructor/Grader: Jessica Striley: jstriley@ufl.edu

Course Description: This course offers a comprehensive introduction to the Geography of Florida, emphasizing the state's physical and cultural landscapes, demographics, natural resources, and regional characteristics. We will also explore how Florida's economic and political affairs connect to a globalizing world through course material such as readings, media, and interactive exercises.

Challenging stereotypes of Florida as merely a land of beaches and Disneyworld, this course highlights the state's diverse environments and resilient communities. Students will critically examine media portrayals and contemporary issues, confronting their own assumptions to better understand modern Florida.

This course emphasizes thinking and writing like a geographer, rather than memorizing facts. Assignments are designed to build skills in writing, research, analysis, and applying geographic knowledge creatively to real-world problems.

Student Learning Outcomes: Students will examine how geography influences the state's past, present, and future, with an emphasis on critical thinking, research, and communication. Students will practice effective writing strategies, including topic development, organization, and adapting style for various audiences and purposes. They will compare and critique texts, build persuasive arguments using evidence, and apply standard written English conventions to produce clear and purposeful writing. By the end of the course, students will be able to:

Content

- Demonstrate understanding of geographic concepts, terminology, and methods as they apply to Florida.
- Analyze the state's natural and human systems across multiple scales and time periods.
- Apply geographic frameworks to interpret current events and regional challenges.

Critical Thinking

- Evaluate geographic issues using evidence from multiple perspectives.

- Construct logical, well-supported arguments in writing.
- Analyze and critique texts and media for rhetorical effectiveness and clarity.

Communication

- Write clearly and effectively for academic and professional audiences.
- Adapt writing style and format for different contexts and purposes.
- Communicate geographic ideas using structured writing, supported by evidence and visual data.

Course Prerequisites: None.

Required textbook: None. Assigned readings and videos will be provided by the instructor in Canvas.

Course materials: There is no required textbook and there are no fees associated with this course. Course materials including lectures, selected readings, documentaries/media, and varied external sources will be provided by the instructor via Canvas.

Course Communications: You can contact the instructor at the email given above or via the inbox in Canvas. Canvas keeps a full record of correspondence, so this is preferred.

Canvas E-learning: This class will be conducted using the [Canvas e-Learning platform](#). The syllabus, course calendar, reading materials, and resources will be available through Canvas. I will communicate with the class regularly through Canvas announcements, so be sure to check regularly for updates. All assignments must be posted through Canvas unless otherwise instructed. Grades will be posted on Canvas. The best method of contact for the instructor is through Canvas email.

Please note that private discussions about grades are ONLY allowed through canvas or during offices hours, as this is the University policy for security and privacy reasons, we cannot discuss your grades through UFL email.

If you experience problems with the e-Learning system, such as log-in issues, please contact the **UF Computing Help Desk at the Hub**. You can also call the help desk at 352-392-4357 or send them an email: helpdesk@ufl.edu

Gordon Rule (GR-WR) - 6,000 words:

- Over the semester, students will complete a minimum of 6,000 words of graded writing assignments that meet the criteria for the Writing Requirement (WR). These assignments are designed to promote critical thinking, synthesis of course content, and clear communication.
- The Writing Requirement (WR) ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning.

- To receive credit for the university's Writing Requirement in this course, you must complete all required writing assignments. Submitting only some of the assignments, even with a passing overall course grade, will result in no credit being awarded for the Writing Requirement. Please check your gradebook regularly to ensure that all writing assignments have been submitted. If you are missing any assignments, submit them as soon as possible.
- Course grades have two components. To receive writing requirement credit, a student must receive a grade of C or higher and a satisfactory completion of the writing component of the course.

Instructor Feedback and Assessment Criteria:

- All written assignments will be evaluated and graded for content as well as grammar, punctuation, clarity, coherence, and organization. Students will receive written feedback on assignments to support revision and improvement.
- Assignments will be submitted through Canvas, with individual word counts totaling 6,000 words across the semester. Deadlines for each assignment are listed on the course schedule.
- A detailed rubric for evaluating written assignments is provided in the course materials on Canvas.

Citation Guides: In all assignments, you are expected to properly cite any sources you reference using a standard citation format (e.g., APA). Proper citation is essential to academic integrity and helps you give credit to the original authors and sources of your information. For guidance on proper citation formats, visit the UF Libraries citation guide:

<https://guides.uflib.ufl.edu/libraryresearch/citingsources#s-lg-box-18406855>

AI policy: Because this is a writing-intensive course that fulfills the 6,000-word University Writing Requirement, **ALL WRITTEN WORK MUST BE YOUR OWN**. You may not use generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Gemini, Copilot etc.) to write, rewrite, or edit your essays or assignments.

You may use AI tools only for early-stage brainstorming (e.g., generating ideas or outlining). If you decide to do so, you must disclose it in a brief note at the end of your assignment on it in the comment section of your submission: The name of the tool used and how and why you used it.

It is a violation of university policy to misrepresent work that you submit or exchange with your instructor by characterizing it as your own, such as submitting responses to assignments that do not acknowledge the use of generative AI tools. If you're unsure about acceptable use, please ask before submitting.

Plagiarism Policy: All work submitted must be the student's own original work. Plagiarism: which is defined as presenting someone else's words, ideas, or work as your own, is a serious academic offense. This includes:

- Copying or improperly paraphrasing without citation

- Reusing your own past work without permission (self-plagiarism)
- Submitting work from any source without proper attribution
- Submitting work you did not author, including work generated by AI or purchased from outside sources

Any instance of plagiarism may result in disciplinary action, including failure of the assignment or course, and will be reported per university policy.

University Policy on Academic Misconduct: Academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Conduct Code specifies several behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions.

Visit the [UF Conduct Code website: https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/process/student-conduct-code/](https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/process/student-conduct-code/) for more information.

Students requiring accommodation: Students who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center by visiting <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

University Policy on Accommodating Students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center. See the “[Get Started With the DRC](#)” webpage on the Disability Resource Center site. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester

Attendance policy: In this online, asynchronous course, attendance is not formally taken. However, active participation and engagement are encouraged to maximize learning. If you need to make up an exam or assignment due to unforeseen circumstances, please reach out to the instructor to coordinate alternative arrangements. Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in the course are consistent with university policies. See [UF Academic Regulations and Policies for more information regarding the University Attendance Policies](#).

Late submissions policy: Students may submit assignments late without penalty. While timely submissions are encouraged to stay on track with the course, I understand that life can be unpredictable. If you need extra time, you do not need to ask for permission, just submit your work as soon as you are able. Students should submit assignments as close to the due date as possible to receive timely feedback and keep up with the course material. All assignments must be submitted by the final course deadline to receive credit.

Course evaluations: Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

Procedure for conflict resolution: Any classroom issues, disagreements or grade disputes should be discussed first between the instructor and the student. If the problem cannot be resolved, please contact the Geography Department Associate Chair (Dr. Gabriela Hamerlinck; ghamerlinck@ufl.edu). Be prepared to provide documentation of the problem, as well as all graded materials for the semester. Issues that cannot be resolved departmentally will be referred to the University Ombuds Office (<http://www.ombuds.ufl.edu>; 352-392-1308) or the Dean of Students Office (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu>; 352-392-1261).

Course Schedule

Module	Topic	Assignments
1	Florida's Physical Geography Defining Geography and Florida Florida's Physical Geography	Essay 1: Favorite Place in Florida [1500 words] Discussion 1: Favorite Place - Tour guide [200 words] Activity 1: Florida's Geological History
2	Human-Environmental Interactions Florida's Weather and Climate	Discussion 2: Hurricane Discussion [200 words] Activity 2: Article Hunt
3	Historical, Cultural, and Human Geography Florida's History and First Floridians	Essay 2: The Cultural Landscape of Florida [1000 words] Discussion 3: Ethnocentricity and Accents [200 words]
4	Urban and Regional Development Florida's Urban Geography Florida's Energy Landscape	Essay 3: Florida Issues Report [1500 words] Discussion 4: The Sarasota Experience [200 words]
5	Economic and Political Geography Florida's Natural Resources and Economy Florida's Political Geography	Activity 3: Energy in Florida Discussion 5: Politics in Florida [200 words]
6	Social Geography of Florida Florida's Population Modern Florida and the Future of Florida	Essay 4: Famous Floridian [1000 words]
Final Exam (Comprehensive & Closed book) Details about the final exam and final exam date available on canvas.		

Course Makeup and Grading Distribution:

Assignment Type	Points	Percentage of Final Grade
Assigned Readings and Material	Complete/Incomplete	0%
Writing Assignments	20 points each (Essays) 10 points each (Discussion posts)	75%
Activities	10 points each	15%
Final Exam	50 points	10%

Reading Assignments and Essay Writing (75%): This course includes assigned readings and media (such as videos and articles) that are essential for understanding the themes and topics covered in the Geography of Florida. Essays will ask you to engage critically with these materials and apply course concepts to real-world examples. All essay topics will relate to major themes discussed in the class, encouraging thoughtful analysis and clear communication through writing

Discussions and Activities (15%): You will participate in discussions and activities designed to deepen your understanding of Florida's geography. Discussions offer a space for reflection, peer-to-peer exchange, and exploration of key issues. Activities may involve creative or real-world applications that connect course concepts to your experiences and perspectives. This course does not have any quizzes.

Final Exam (10%): The final exam will be comprehensive and will assess your understanding of the fundamental concepts explored throughout the course. It evaluates how well you can synthesize material from readings, lectures, discussions, and activities to demonstrate your knowledge of Florida's physical, cultural, and environmental geography. The final exam is closed-book.

Grading Scheme: Grades will be available for you to see on Canvas. Final grades will be rounded up. See the UF Catalog's "[Grades and Grading Policies](#)" for information on how UF assigns grade points.

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E
94-100	90-93	87-89	84-86	80-83	77-79	74-76	70-73	67-69	64-66	61-63	< 61
4.0	3.67	3.33	3.0	2.67	2.33	2.0	1.67	1.33	1.0	0.67	0

Netiquette and Communication Courtesy: Everyone is expected to follow rules of common courtesy in all email messages, zoom meetings, threaded discussions, and chats.

Course Drop: If you decide to drop the course for any reason, you must request to do so through the appropriate channels by the appropriate date. Failing to do so will result in a failing grade for the course. For planning purposes, it is helpful for you to communicate with your course instructor if you may need to drop the class.

Important Note on Assignments and Due Dates: Assignment deadlines and details are subject to change at the instructor's discretion. However, any changes will be communicated at least two weeks in advance of the original due date. Deadlines will not be moved to an earlier date.

Syllabus Disclaimer: This syllabus outlines the current structure and goals for the course. While we aim to follow this plan, adjustments may be made during the semester to improve the learning experience. Any updates will be communicated clearly and in a timely manner.

Academic Resources

- **E-learning technical support:** Contact the UF Computing Help Desk at <https://helpdesk.ufl.edu/> , 352-392-4357 or via email at helpdesk@ufl.edu.
- **Career Connections Center:** Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services at <https://career.ufl.edu/>
- **Library Support:** <http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask>. Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.
- **Teaching Center:** 1317 Turlington Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352- 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.
- **Writing Studio:** Daytime (9:30am-3:30pm): 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138 | Evening (5:00pm-7:00pm): 1545 W University Avenue (Library West, Rm. 339). Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers. <https://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>
- **Academic Complaints:** Office of the Ombuds; Visit the Complaint Portal webpage for more information: <https://www.ombuds.ufl.edu/complaint-portal/>
- **Enrollment Management Complaints (Registrar, Financial Aid, Admissions):** View the Student Complaint Procedure webpage for more information: <https://em.ufl.edu/complaint>

Health and Wellness

- **U Matter, We Care:** If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit <https://umatter.ufl.edu/> to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.
- **Counseling and Wellness Center:** Visit <https://counseling.ufl.edu/> or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.
- **Student Health Care Center:** Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need or visit <https://shcc.ufl.edu/> .
- **UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center:** For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; <https://ufhealth.org/emergency-room-trauma-center>
- **GatorWell Health Promotion Services:** For prevention services focused on optimal wellbeing, including Wellness Coaching for Academic Success, visit <https://gatorwell.ufsa.ufl.edu/> or call 352-273- 4450.